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ABSTRACT

This booklet explains how high schools can replicate the service learning youth consultant program that was originally formed at Spring Valley High School (SVHS) in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1996 to assume governance of SVHS's service learning program, which is called VikingServe. The booklet begins with an overview of VikingServe and a listing of the many roles and activities performed by youth consultants at SVHS, including the following five: helping to plan, implement, and evaluate service learning activities and programs; advocating meaningful student involvement in service learning; consulting with teachers, community members, and other youth; making site visits and attending meetings to represent the student perspective and share service learning experiences; and providing leadership training for youth interested in school/community development. Discussed in the next several sections are the following eight phases of developing and implementing a service learning youth consultant program: selecting a consultant team; nominating team members; designing the team's infrastructure; forming and operating standing and ad hoc committees; conducting meetings and activities; organizing a retreat; removing youth consultants; and funding the consultant program. Several forms are provided for use in the consultant nomination process. Also included are management and training tips and the addresses of six resource organizations. (MN)

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LINKING LEARNING WITH LIFE

# Route To Success

## A Leader School's Youth Consultant Program

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# Route To Success

## A Leader School's Youth Consultant Program

by

Jennifer Kelley

Joanna Specter

Jamaal Young



Linking Learning With Life

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# Let's Take a Journey

*"What youth can do is limited more by social and political convention than by capacity, energy, or willingness."*
*—Conrad and Hedin, 1987*

We feel that the power of the youth voice is critical to the success of service learning. By capturing the enthusiasm and power of youth, one can bring about tremendous results for students, schools, and the community. Together, we can make a difference!

Service learning Youth Consultants are students who are adept at taking the ideals espoused by community service learning to a higher level. Youth Consultants strive to link social issues to what is going on in the classroom through technical assistance, evaluation, and advocacy of community service learning initiatives. Youth Consultants actively work to create reciprocal relationships among all areas of the community, including the adult and student sectors. One of the greatest benefits of any service learning program is that it fosters continuing partnerships between youth and adults.

This work has led our Youth Consultants team to be involved with America's Promise, to coordinate an after-school program that works to increase literacy among local elementary school children, and to travel around the nation advocating the benefits of service learning.

As Youth Consultants, this team has proven that youth can be a powerful force in leadership, civic commitment, and societal change. This book is designed to demonstrate a model framework on how to implement a service learning Youth Consultant program in your school in order to realize this power. We understand that each school has its own unique set of needs and concerns, so we wish to stress that our program model is a guide which you can adapt to your own school setting.

Come along with us now on our journey; we have found that this route has been successful for us. We know that you, too, can develop a successful service learning Youth Consultant program at your school!

*Jennifer Kelley, Joanna Specter, and Jamaal Young*

Reference: Conrad, D., & Hedin, D. (1987). *Youth service: A guidebook for developing and operating effective programs.* Washington, DC: Independent Sector.

# The Map Overview

## Service Learning at Spring Valley High School

Service is a common thread linking co-curricular and academic-based programs at Spring Valley High School (SVHS) in Columbia, South Carolina, a National Service Learning Leader School. Each year SVHS staff members engage hundreds of students in a variety of projects such as drug prevention education; mentoring and tutoring students of all ages, including those with special needs; spending time with and assisting the elderly; fundraising and conducting charitable drives; helping with environmental concerns; and many other efforts that address a myriad of social problems.

In 1992, VikingServe was established with the mission to increase the number of SVHS faculty and students engaged in service learning and to integrate service across the curriculum. A task force representative of faculty, students, parents, community, and business partners was created to assist and advise in program development for the first two years. Due to the work of the task force, VikingServe has become a functioning and meaningful part of the Spring Valley culture. More than 1,300 students were engaged in 33,000 hours of school and community service during the 1998-99 school year as part of their class work. Currently, two-thirds of our teaching staff engage students in at least one service project each year, while a quarter of them integrate service into their curricula on a regular, ongoing basis.

Partnerships strengthen and sustain the VikingServe program. Ongoing collaboration with agencies that help the hungry and homeless, the Red Cross, the United Way, the Midland's Council on Aging, as well as local foundations, businesses, churches, and civic organizations make possible our students' tremendous community outreach.

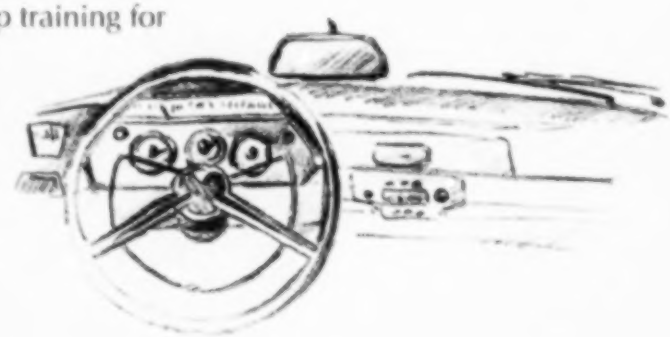
VikingServe is not what one would consider a club with an official membership. Instead, a core group of faculty and students sponsors a number of different service learning initiatives and projects in which any students in the school may participate. The only aspect of VikingServe that does have an active ongoing membership is the service learning Youth Consultant program.

# In the Driver's Seat

## Youth Consultant Roles and Activities

Originally formed in the spring of 1996 with the purpose of assuming governance of VikingServe, the service learning Youth Consultants have not only established themselves as the leaders of service learning within the school, but also as leaders within the field as a whole. As the leadership team for VikingServe, Youth Consultants assume many roles, including the following:

- Helping to plan, implement, and evaluate service learning activities, projects, and programs
- Advocating meaningful student involvement by demonstrating the role of youth in developing service learning programs
- Consulting with teachers, community members, and other youth in person and/or by mail, fax, e-mail, and phone
- Making site visits and attending meetings to represent the student perspective and to share service learning experiences
- Serving on panels which further the cause of youth development and service learning
- Making presentations to educators, community members, or other youth interested in service learning
- Creating videos, multimedia productions, brochures, and other publications which document and share service learning information and experiences
- Contributing articles for publications supporting youth development and service learning
- Collaborating with other youth and adult peer consultant teams for presentations or special projects
- Providing leadership training for youth interested in school/community development



# Getting Started
## Building the Team

Every journey has a beginning, so let's get started! At Spring Valley, the Youth Consultant program was originally conceived by the school's service learning coordinator, the head of VikingServe. Always mindful to include student leadership in every aspect of the VikingServe program, the coordinator wanted to formally bring together a group of students to be service learning practitioners on a consistent basis. Drawing from her experience with the student community, as well as from the advice and nominations from school faculty oriented with youth development and service learning, the coordinator recruited seven students to be the original Youth Consultants.

From the beginning, we have found that it is especially important to have the strong leadership of an adult to serve as a guide. Also, we recommend that you begin small and always keep your membership to a manageable level; quality is preferable to quantity.

Once the sponsor has helped to get the program started, it is then time to let the students take over and run with it! If students have ownership, the initiative is more likely to succeed. Therefore, it is important that the first leaders of any initiative decide on how future members of the team will be selected.

The following steps are those that the original Youth Consultants set up at our school, which can serve as a road map for others.

# All Aboard!

## Selecting the Team

### The Nomination Criteria

The nomination criteria were established by Youth Consultants. Youth Consultants are expected to:

- Maintain a minimum GPA: 2.5 on a 4.0 scale at SVHS. This criterion was selected because of the time Youth Consultants (YCs) must commit. Students must be able to balance family, co-curricular activities, and academics.
- Demonstrate dedication/leadership in community service or service learning activities. We decided that any YC must have already shown an ethic of serving others, whether through community service or service learning, both aspects of service which we hold in high regard.
- Demonstrate leadership or leadership potential and good character. Each YC is expected to demonstrate self-motivation and initiative. We also look to see that they have a specific talent that the YC team could benefit from. It is critical that every YC have within themselves the ideal of being a servant leader, leading by helping others and contributing to the group in a way which helps us to better efficiency and output.
- Have a good discipline and/or attendance record. Again, being a YC requires a major commitment. A student faced with discipline, attendance, or character problems cannot fully contribute to the team.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude, a healthy work ethic, and the ability to work as part of a team. These requirements are all integral to being a good leader and part of any team. Youth Consultants spend a great deal of time together, and each member must be willing to work towards a positive goal which helps maintain a spirit of teamwork and comradeship.

*(Note: Every attempt is made by the Youth Consultants to select and maintain a good balance of members based on grade, gender, race, leadership, and service experience and/or potential).*

# The Nomination Process

- Nominations are taken from YC members and the YC sponsor. Because each Youth Consultant is actively involved with the school and would therefore know those students who would make the best new YCs, our nominations are taken from our current membership, in addition to input from the YC sponsor and other teachers. We also like to evaluate the team's effectiveness and identify those leadership and special talents which would be beneficial to the team.
- Nomination letters and applications are sent to nominees. The application is designed so that each applicant is allowed to showcase examples of the nomination criteria. Each school may design its own application in order to give applicants an opportunity to address that school's unique requirements.
- Interviews are scheduled with YC Nomination Committee.
- Interviews are conducted by YCs. Every applicant undergoes an individual interview where each current Youth Consultant is given the opportunity to ask the applicant any question they feel is pertinent to becoming a new YC. Also, applicants are often asked what we call "creative" questions; these questions are often off-the-wall and help give insight to an applicants' creativity and personality. Each applicant is then scored based on a point-rating scale.
- Final decisions are made through a consensus. Those YCs who conducted the interviews then discuss each applicant with the entire YC team. The team then decides how many new members to add. The team, taking into account the applicant's interview score and the needs of the team, then decides through consensus which applicants are accepted as new members.
- Send out acceptance letter and non-acceptance letter. As evidenced in our letters, we try to be mindful of others' feelings and encourage each non-selected applicant to continue their commitment to service as they may be nominated again. Often, we have more highly qualified applicants than slots available.

# Sample Nomination Letter

November 5, 2000

Congratulations! You have been recommended for membership on the VikingServe Youth Consultant Team. Students are recommended on the basis of their leadership or leadership potential and their experience with community service.

Students selected for membership will participate in a variety of training and service experiences with other Youth Consultants. The goal of these experiences is to teach team members all major facets of service learning, how it is integrated into school curriculum, how youth can become a powerful voice in their communities, and how they can help improve the quality of life for themselves and others through service.

The Spring Valley VikingServe Program is a nationally recognized service learning program led by SVHS Youth Consultants. Youth Consultants have conducted leadership and service training in the Midlands, in our state, and across our nation. Under the leadership of Youth Consultants, Spring Valley was recognized as one of the first 70 National Service Learning Leader Schools last June at a ceremony in Washington, DC. Just recently, SVHS Youth Consultants received an Outstanding Volunteer award from State Education Superintendent, Inez Tenenbaum.

As you can see, VikingServe Youth Consultants must commit time and considerable effort to their work. This work will be credit-bearing for those enrolled in classes that require service. Becoming a Youth Consultant benefits the school, the community, and the Youth Consultants. The experiences are the kind that attract prospective colleges and employers.

Please consider this opportunity to apply and review the information with your parents. The selection process timeline follows:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11/5 | Nomination letters go out | 12/1 | Youth Consultant Dinner Meeting |
| 11/10 | Information meeting at lunch | 12/4 | Overnight Retreat |
| 11/17 | Applications due | 12/5 | YC Service Project |
| 11/18 | Interviews | | |

If you or your parents have questions, you may contact _____ .
Again, congratulations on your nomination.

Sincerely,
Principal

# Sample Application

APPLICATION

Student: _____

ID: _____ Grade: _____ School Year _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Parents: _____ Home Phone: _____

Current Class Schedule: Semester: _____

| | Teacher | Course | Location |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2nd | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3rd | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4th | _____ | _____ | _____ |

1) List any leadership roles which you have taken on that could contribute to your role on this Youth Consultant Team.

_____

_____

_____

2) What personal strengths do you have which make you (or could make you) an effective leader?

_____

_____

_____

3) List and describe any community service experiences in which you have been involved in the past two years. Be specific about your accomplishments.

_____

_____

_____

4) Does your schedule (curricular and co-curricular) permit you to give the time and effort it would take to be an active Youth Consultant? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

## APPLICANT STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

I have read the information on VikingServe Youth Consultants. I understand that the selection period is for one year and that the selection is renewable through reapplication each year. I also understand that Youth Consultants who do not meet membership expectations can be removed after a probationary period. I have given this application serious consideration and, if selected, will make every effort to be a team member in good standing.

Applicant _____ Date _____

## PARENT SUPPORT STATEMENT

I have read the application and information regarding VikingServe Youth Consultants and I support my son/daughter in his/her efforts to become part of the Youth Consultant Team.

Parent _____ Date _____

## TO THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

☐ I have conflicts this semester with the training and/or meeting schedule. Please consider me for another semester.

Applicant _____

Date _____

# Sample Interview Scoring Sheet

Nominee _____

## Scoring Criteria

The Interview Committee will score each candidate on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest, 5 the highest).

## Interview Rating Scale

**Service Experience** (any area: direct/indirect, school/non-school related)

1= Hardly any experience
2= Shows potential for more involvement
3= Brief history of school/community service
4= Experienced in school/community service
5= Self-initiated with outstanding school/community service

**Leadership/Service Potential**

1= No leadership
2= Shows potential
3= Shows an average amount of leadership/service potential
4= Demonstrates leadership/service potential in several areas
5= Strong leadership/service potential in and outside of school

**Sociability**

1= Rude
2= Demonstrates a negative/apathetic attitude
3= Makes an effort to be nice
4= Friendly
5= Extremely nice and sociable

**Communication/Assertiveness** (creativity, poise, tact, effectiveness of response)

1= Quiet, unclear in responses
2= No creativity, yet clearer responses
3= Little creativity, gets point across clearly
4= Demonstrates creativity and is clear with points
5= Very creative and responses are clear and understandable

**Interpersonal Skills**

1= Appears self-absorbed
2= Shows potential skill
3= Average amount of skills
4= Good interpersonal skills clearly demonstrated
5= Displays empathy for others

## Scoring

_____Service Experience
_____Leadership/Service Potential
_____Friendliness/Sociability
_____Communication
_____Interpersonal skills
_____**Total Score**

## Analysis

25-18: Promising
17-13: Good
12-8: Average
7-0: Poor

## Interviewer Notes/Comments:

_____

_____

Interviewer: _____ Date _____

## Sample Interview Topics

- Describe your school or community involvement.
- What is your understanding of the YCs?
- What commitments do you have that may interfere with YCs?
- Why do you want to be a YC?
- What is special about you; in other words, what might you contribute to the group?

### Questions For Fun and Creativity

- If you could be one of the following—a wristwatch, a mantle clock, or a pocketwatch—which one would you be and why?
- What is the most recent dream that you have had?
- What type of plant (or vegetable, animal, cartoon character) would you like to be and why?

Note: These are only sample questions. Interviewers should choose creative questions at random for various candidates.

# Sample Acceptance Letter

Date

Congratulations! You have been selected as a member of the VikingServe Youth Consultant team. Your qualifications were very strong among the many candidates interviewed. Your leadership and service experience will be an asset to our group.

Please note once again the following required dates and events set forth in your nomination letter. Please let us know if you are unable to meet these requirements so that we can select from other qualified applicants.

| | |
|---|---|
| December 1 | YC & Parents Covered Dish Dinner (new YCs will be introduced) |
| December 4 | YC Overnight Training Retreat |
| December 5 | YC Service Project/Wal-Mart Days (9 a.m.-1 p.m.) |

Name: _____

ID: _____ Home Phone _____

☐ Yes. I accept membership to the VikingServe Youth Consultants and will participate in the activities outlined above.

☐ No. I am unable to meet the training dates at this time. Please keep me informed of other opportunities.

## Sample Non-acceptance Letters (two versions)

Date:

Dear:

Thank you for your interest in the VikingServe Youth Consultant Program. Your application reflected some valuable leadership and service experience. Due to your current commitments in and out of school, it appears that now is not an ideal time for you to join us. We will have another selection round and will let you know about a date at a later time. You will be notified of the selection rounds and training times.

Again, thank you for your interest in the VikingServe Youth Consultants!

Sincerely
Youth Consultant Co-Chair

Date:

Dear:

After much discussion and some hard decisions, VikingServe Youth Consultants have made selections from the current round of applicants. Although you were not selected in this round, we hope you remain interested in becoming a Youth Consultant.

Thank you for your interest in VikingServe Youth Consultants!

Sincerely,
Youth Consultant Co-Chair

We have two selection rounds every school year—one in the fall and one in the spring. The purpose of the fall selection is to replace those YCs who have left the program for various reasons (e.g., graduation, overcommitment) with qualified sophomores and/or juniors. The spring selection round is an appropriate time to tap freshmen who have demonstrated qualities that would enhance the YC program.

# The Road Map

## Team Infrastructure

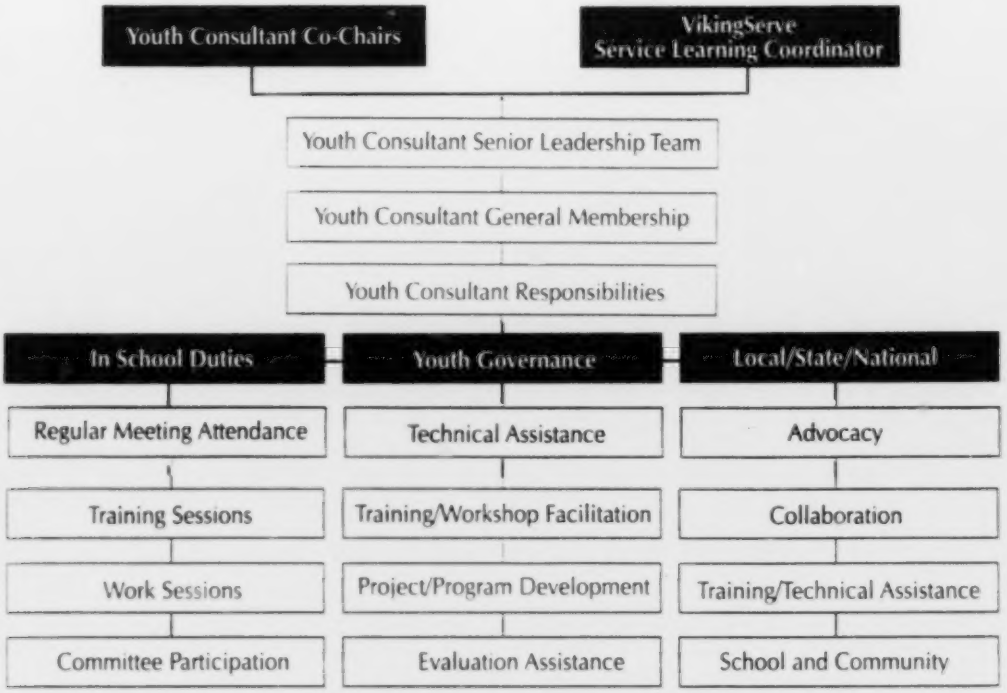
Every school organization needs to have an adult sponsor—someone in the passenger seat. Having the service learning coordinator as our sponsor has been extremely helpful, but we realize that not every school has the benefit of a person in this position. Whoever the sponsor happens to be, it must be someone who is dedicated to service learning and familiar with its principles, energetic, and willing to allow youth to use their potential to lead themselves. A sponsor must be willing to work with youth as an equal partner and to serve as an advisor, mentor, and a friend to the youth.

We have found that once the team is up and running, leadership of the team is best taken on by two co-chairs, preferably individuals with at least one year of experience. These individuals work closely together in order to develop the agendas for meetings, conduct business, plan any training, and guide the work of production committees.

Co-chairs encourage members to take active leadership roles within the team. For example, individual members should lead the production committees. It is important that every YC understand that all members have ownership of the program and that every YC must take on leadership roles and use their individual talents to the best of their ability. The co-chairs work very closely with the YC sponsor to make sure that the YC program operates as smoothly and productively as possible.

Each year, the current co-chairs nominate their successors for the coming year. Nominations will be based largely upon members' leadership qualities and major commitments to the YC initiative. Once the two individuals are nominated, the co-chairs will consult with these individuals in order to ascertain if the nominees are willing and feel personally capable of handling the job. If the nominees agree to be the next two co-chairs, their names are submitted to the team for approval by consensus. During this process, the two nominees are not in the same room as the team. The current co-chairs explain to the team the reasons why they chose the nominees. The team is then given the chance to discuss the recommendation. If there are no major objections, the two nominees are then officially made the new co-chairs.

## Spring Valley VikingServe Youth Consultant Framework




Directly under the co-chairs is the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This team is composed of all the senior members of the group. As the seniors, they are all looked upon to be the leaders of the group (even though they were not designated as co-chairs) and are expected to act as the main initiators of the committee work. The committees are divided up between the SLT (depending on their areas of expertise), so that each member has an even number of committees to preside over. There are regular meetings of the co-chairs and the SLT outside of the regular weekly group meetings. In these meetings, any issues which have been raised by group members, as well as committee progress reports, are discussed.

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# The Engine That Could
## Production Committees

The majority of YC work is accomplished through a committee system. Each committee is headed up by a Youth Consultant and has specific tasks and duties. Committee members report regularly to the co-chairs, as well as to the team as a whole. The membership of each committee is comprised of from three to five Youth Consultants, with each committee being encouraged to solicit the help of other YCs. As the Youth Consultants have several responsibilities, both long- and short-term, there are two separate types of committees: Standing and Select. Each of the Youth Consultants is expected to be on at least one of these standing committees and on fluctuating select committees depending on their schedules.

## In It for the Long Haul: Standing Committees

A Standing Committee is one that functions throughout the year and requires long-term dedication and effort. Because these committees are long-term, they are often headed-up by different YCs as the year progresses and often have rotating memberships. The following are examples of standing committees and their functions:

- Nominations. This committee schedules the meetings for nominating new members, distributes the applications, schedules the interviews, and distributes notification letters.
- Financial. Members of this committee are responsible for keeping track of the funds in Youth Consultant accounts. Members also work closely with another standing committee, the Fundraising committee. It conducts several small fundraisers such as candy and donut sales.
- Technology. This committee works to develop program brochures, multimedia presentations, and a service learning web site.

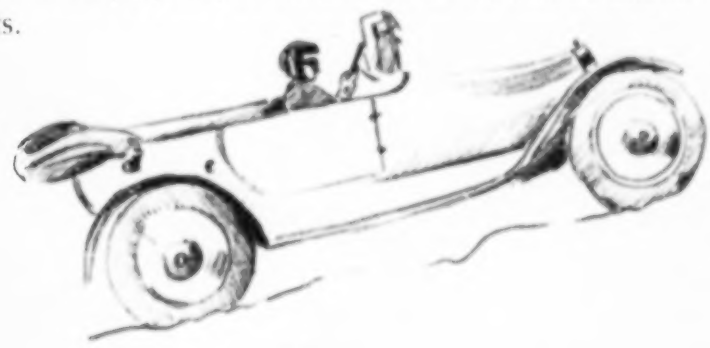
- Evaluation. This committee conducts the school's annual survey to determine the amount of service learning and community service being done in the school. This committee also works closely with the Technology committee to create graphs and charts of the survey's results.

- Training & Technical Assistance. This committee is in charge of anything from presentations and workshops done by the YCs to work sessions and retreats put on for the YCs. This is a very important part of our organization. They are expected to help engage all YCs into facilitating the sessions, especially in their area of expertise.

- Records and Reporting. This committee is in charge of keeping all records of attendance and dues. They also are in charge of all pictures and the upkeep of our YC scrapbook.

## A Quick Trip Around the Block: Select Committees

A Select Committee arises out of an immediate need and is only required for a relatively short period of time. Often, Select Committees are formed to help with community service learning projects outside of VikingServe or to prepare the YC team for an upcoming special event, conference, or initiative. Examples of this type of committee are those that plan for schoolwide projects, conferences that we will be attending, or YC retreats.



# Time to "Fill 'Er Up"

## Meetings and Activities

True to the ideals of service learning, Youth Consultants plan, implement, reflect, celebrate, and evaluate all aspects of the YC initiative. In order to accomplish these steps, it is necessary that we hold regular meetings. These meetings hold three basic purposes: planning, work, and recreational sessions. During planning sessions, members set goals for the team and map out strategies on how to reach these goals. Work sessions, which often overlap with planning sessions, are set times when the group gets together and accomplishes its goals. Recreational sessions are arranged every so often and serve the purpose of celebrating our achievements. Some of these meetings have involved parents and community members while others are just for the Youth Consultants to let our hair down (for example, every year the YCs hold a pool party for the graduating members of the team). Each meeting is also an opportunity to share general information about Youth Consultant business. Often during meetings, production committees will report out to the group as a whole on their progress and also communicate their needs. Our recommendations are:

- Once regularly scheduled meetings are set, these meetings should be members' first priority.
- Members should be on time, as lunch and snacks are usually provided.
- Members are asked to honor the purpose of the meetings. While regular meetings focus on business at hand, recreational meetings are for fun, enjoyment, and interaction.
- Meetings will be conducted by the co-chairs, and minutes will be available after each meeting.

While we do have set weekly meetings for the entire team, often extra meetings are scheduled to accomplish our goals, including those meetings set by production commitees.

- Regular Weekly Meetings. These meetings provide updates for group members on upcoming events, committee reports, and other "housekeeping" items.

- Committee Meetings. These meetings are planned by the committee specifically for the committee. The committees meet on their own time to work on their projects.
- Planning Sessions. These are scheduled in order for all YCs to be involved in every stage of the process of a workshop or session. We plan out our session, pull our materials together, and practice, practice, practice.
- Work Sessions. We use our work sessions to give us time to work together on upcoming events as well as work on some of the goals we have set for the year.
- Community Service. Our Youth Consultants like to try to get together as often as possible to stay involved in projects around our community.
- Parents and Other Important People Meeting. After we have selected our first round of new YCs each year, we like to have a meeting with our parents and other community members who have been involved in our program to inform them on what we have been doing and our plans for the rest of the year.

## Let's Go On a Retreat!

Throughout the year, the Youth Consultants have sessions in which we have an overnight retreat totally devoted to us as a team. We realized that it is important to maintain the internal balance of the group. Problems often arise in a group as structured and time-consuming as the Youth Consultants program, and these need to be worked through to allow us to stay focused on our work. Through these retreats, we are able to stay focused on the specific goals of our regular meetings and work through the more intense problems outside of our regular school setting.

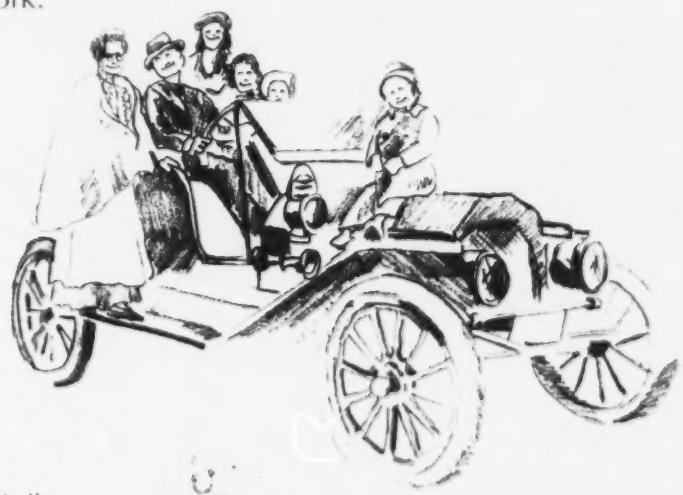
- Summer Retreat. For this retreat, we try to get ready to go back to school and our busy schedules. We set our individual goals and plan for our involvement in the next semester of YCs. This is also a good time to work on our committees. We identify Select Committees that will be active through the next semester as well as determine who will be on which committees. We might also identify training programs needed, such as grant-writing, sharpening public presentations, conducting interactive workshops, goal-setting, and action-plan development.

- Fall Retreat. This is the most important of all the retreats in which we are engaged. We are at the point in our year when we have just accepted our new installment of YCs. Although we all are now advocates of service learning, we are not all experts—yet. At this retreat, all the YCs spend one night and one day doing intensive training in service learning, leadership, goal setting, and teamwork. It is our hope that through this retreat and their upcoming experience, all the YCs will grow into their new roles as Youth Consultants.

- Winter Retreat. At this retreat, we find it most important to work on setting and reevaluating our goals for the year. It is also an opportune time for the committees to meet and set their goals. The most important component of this retreat is to work through group problems. We assess our group problems and effectiveness as well as voice individual opinions about the setup and productivity of the YCs.

- Spring Retreat. Celebrate! With the end of the school year, we enjoy taking time out to reflect on what we've accomplished. We outline what our involvement will be over the summer, specifying our prior commitments as well as preparing what we would like to have ready for the next year.

- Celebrating. The Youth Consultants try to celebrate as often as possible. Whether it is in the form of a quick dinner at a conference or just a meeting to showcase our work, we are always trying to show our pride in each other and ourselves. We try to incorporate this into our work at all times, especially since in our line of service, there are not a lot of immediate rewards for good work. At the end of each year we have a pool party in which we try to recap some of the finer points of the year. After we have finished with the "official celebration business," we eat, relax, and celebrate the short break from our work.



# Car Trouble

## Procedure for Youth Consultant Removal

In a perfect world, all of the elements in a leadership group, like the Youth Consultants, would work without a problem. Unfortunately, we have found this perfect world does not exist. We have learned to have procedures in place in case difficulties do arise.

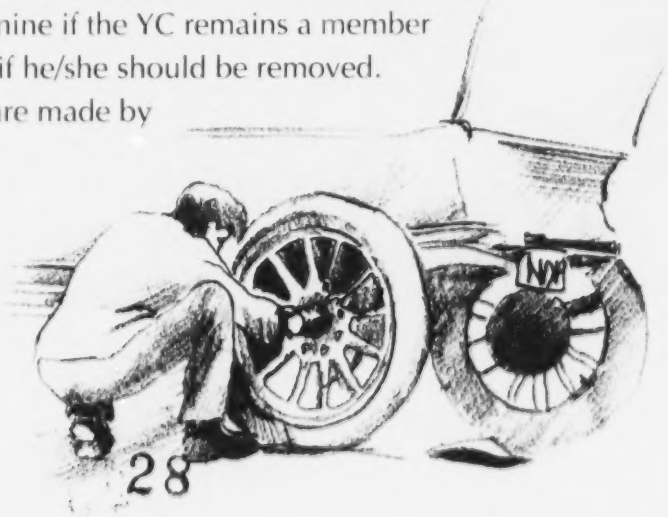
Sometimes, a Youth Consultant may not be contributing to the team effort needed for a YC program to be a success. We handle this kind of problem using the following guidelines.

### Reasons for Considering the Removal of a YC

- Violation of any nomination criteria, e.g., GPA falls below 2.5; discipline and/or attendance problems; other nominating criteria
- Poor participation and/or productivity (including chronic absence from meetings and/or activities)
- Failure to maintain a positive attitude, good character, healthy work ethic, and/or ability to work as a team

### Removal Procedure

- A letter of concern is sent to the YC informing him/her of the problem or concern.
- If the problem persists, the YC goes through a probationary period of time to be determined by the advisor and co-chairs.
- At the end of the probationary period, the advisor and co-chairs determine if the YC remains a member in good standing or if he/she should be removed.
- Removal decisions are made by the overall group membership.



# Travel Costs

## Supporting Our Work

There are many costs involved in maintaining our YC program, including our retreats, celebrations, and conference travel. Therefore, we have devised a dues program plus fundraising efforts to support our work.

Members of the Youth Consultants pay dues. We have set these for $25 per semester, and we use fundraisers to help us reach this goal.

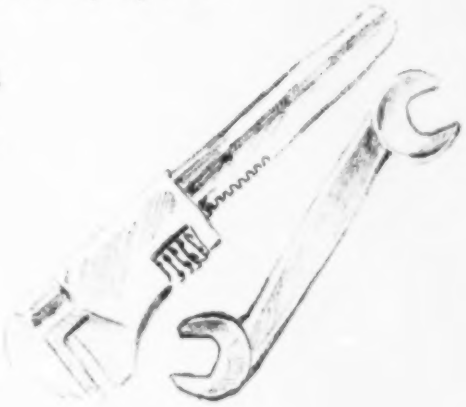
Because we attend the National Service Learning Conference each year, we have substantial travel fees. In addition to our fundraising, we have supported our travel by obtaining many grants. For example, one of these received was from a proposal to the National Youth Leadership Council to become one of the first NYLC FELLOWS model schools. In addition to providing the monetary resources that were needed to become a model program, we were also provided with funds to travel to the national conference to share the results of our work.

We also maintain a scholarship fund for our graduating Youth Consultants, and each YC is expected to contribute $50 per year to this fund. Again, these fees are also raised through YC fundraisers. Because of this fund, we have been able to provide one or two graduate YCs with a significant scholarship each year.

# Tools for the Road

We have found these tools helpful in both the management and the training in our Youth Consultant program.

## Ten Tips for Teen Leaders



1 With group members, determine
   - the group's mission
   - goals/objectives
   - a time line

2 Identify:
   - key roles within the group
   - who will serve in those roles
   - responsibilities for each role

3 Match tasks to individual capabilities. Everyone has particular talents that would better suit them to certain jobs.

4 Involve as many of the group members as possible. Don't depend on the same people all the time for everything. Don't assume that people don't want to do things. Ask.

5 Don't dictate. Delegate. Review goals, tasks, etc. with your group members. Be as clear as possible about what must be done and when. As a leader, you should guide when guidance is needed, but not tell your group members exactly how everything should be done. Help your members become leaders, too.

6 Monitor progress regularly, according to your time line. This is a way to double check group members' progress. As a leader, you are ultimately responsible for members' work.

7 Consider alternatives. If work is not going as scheduled, the responsible individual may need extra assistance. This is also when you must decide whether to delegate responsibilities to someone else or to ask for assistance to help you get a job done.

8 Evaluate the task, goal, or project. Keeping a record of goals, objectives, time lines, people responsibilities, etc., will provide a resource for others who follow. Determine what went well and what changes should take place next time.

9 Reflect regularly with the group on how it functions as a team. What is positive about the group's interaction? What are the challenges to be overcome for the good of all? How will the group meet those challenges?

10 Express appreciation often. Everyone needs encouragement and to know that they are valued.

## Setting Personal and Group Goals

Goals are very important in all aspects of everyday life. Often you set goals for yourself without even realizing it. Finish all my homework before 10:00 p.m. Get an "A" in biology. Try to get perfect attendance this year. All are examples of goals responsible teens set for themselves on a regular basis. Sometimes what we think are goals are really wishes, however. What's the difference between a goal and a wish? Take a look below.

### Four Elements of a Good Goal

- Specific. Who is doing what? For what? By when?
- Measurable. Can the goal be rated, counted, or measured so you know whether or not it was achieved?
- Challenging. Will this goal represent significant accomplishment?
- Realistic. Is this goal within my reach?

## Four Steps in the Goal Setting Process

- Set the Goal. The first step of the goal is the most important and the easiest! Once you have thought about what the goal is, look at the four elements above. If your goal statement is specific, measurable, challenging, and realistic, it is not just a wish.
- Make an Action Plan. Once you have established your goal, it is important to set steps in achieving it. An action plan should include major things to be done, tentative dates, times, and also the person(s) in charge of the activities.
- Monitor. Over the course of time that you are trying to accomplish your goal, periodically take a look at how you are doing. Check your action plan to ensure that you are on track for accomplishing your goal. This may also be a good time to make necessary adjustments in your action steps, persons responsible, or the goal itself.
- Evaluate. In the end, it is important to look back over what you've accomplished. Did you achieve your goal? Why? Why not? What was successful? What will you do differently next time?

> *"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."*
>
> —*Aristotle*

Another set of tools we like to use are the video and companion guidebook, "Youth Consultants: Putting It All Together," when introducing new YCs to their new roles. YCs from our school and Wren Middle School, also a Leader School, were involved in the writing and production of these two resources.



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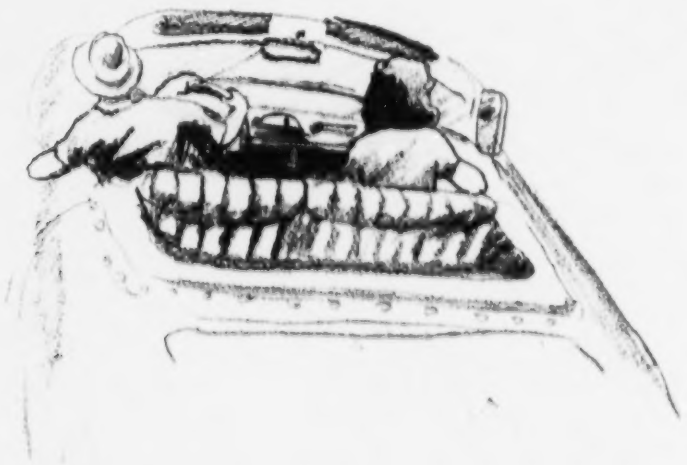
# You Have the Keys, Now Drive!

The Youth Consultant program is one that has constantly evolved throughout its journey over the past few years. Never unwilling to change, we adapt to each new year and situation with the underlying vision that we can make a difference. With three graduating classes so far and more to come, we know that we have formed a team that has the talent and the tools to do so. Using what we have learned from our experiences, we know that you can achieve the same. Again, seeing as we ourselves are always learning new and exciting ways to improve our program, we encourage you to fit our model to your own individual needs and interests. The road ahead can be very bumpy, but we hope that our efforts at Spring Valley can be a map to help guide you around some of those potholes.

So, take the keys, grab the wheel, step on the gas, and know that by empowering yourselves as youth in partnership with adults, you are part of an ever-expanding service learning field dedicated to improving educational experiences the world over. Draw on yourselves and others for support and you will, as Margaret Mead once said, "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."



# High Octane

## Recommended Resources

- Corporation for National Service
  1201 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20525
  202-606-5000 www.cns.gov

- Learn and Serve America Exchange
  Exchange National Center
  National Youth Leadership Council
  1910 West County Road B, St. Paul, MN 55113
  877-LSA-EXCH www.lsaexchange.org

- Maryland Student Service Alliance
  Maryland State Department of Education
  200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201
  410-767-0358 www.mssa.sailorsite.net/

- National Dropout Prevention Center
  Clemson University
  209 Martin St., Clemson, SC 29631-1555
  864-656-2599 www.dropoutprevention.org

- National Youth Leadership Council
  1910 West County Road B, St. Paul, MN 55113
  651-631-3672 www.nylc.org

- National Service Learning Clearinghouse
  University of Minnesota
  1954 Buford Avenue, Room R-460, St. Paul, MN 55108
  800-808-SERV http://umn.edu/~serve/

# Walking Beside Us
## Acknowledgments

Throughout the history of the Youth Consultants and VikingServe, we have learned so much from ourselves and the countless people who have been instrumental in the development of both initiatives and this guide. We would like to thank the following for all of their support and, most importantly, their friendship.

- Marty Duckenfield, Jan Wright, and everyone at the National Dropout Prevention Center
- Dr. Kathy Gibson Carter, Karen Horne, Jana Dailey, and all the staff at the South Carolina Commission on National and Community Service
- Gregory Branch, AmeriCorps member, SC Commissioner for National and Community Service, and Spring Valley High School graduate
- Dr. Sherril Martin, former Assistant Principal at Spring Valley
- Dr. Julia Boyd, Community Relations Director for Richland School District Two
- Dr. Jim Kielsmeier, Wokie Weah, Joy DesMarais, and the National Youth Leadership Council
- And to Ms. Beverly Hiott, a special thank you for your never-tiring commitment to your belief that youth are a powerful and effective voice. You have served as a mentor and a guide not only in our service learning experiences but also in our academic and personal lives. With you as our takeoff point, we have learned that our landing point can be anywhere that we will it to be!

# About VikingServe

VikingServe has been recognized for its exemplary status by the Corporation for National Service, the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC), the National Society for Experiential Education, the Southern Institute for Service Learning, and the SC State Department of Education. The program received one of five national awards given by Volunteers of America in 1996, and it has since been recognized by several local organizations such as the Midlands' Council on Aging, the SC Foster Parents' Association, and the United Way. In 1999, SVHS was selected as one of the first 70 National Service Learning Leader Schools, an awards program initiated by President Bill Clinton.

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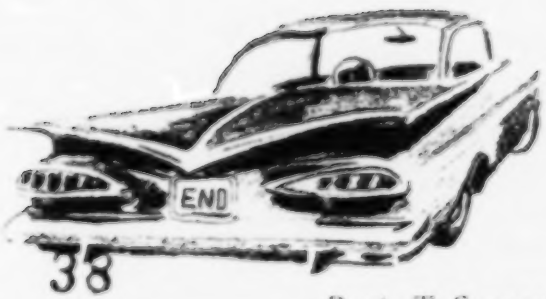
# About the Authors

Jennifer Kelley was the co-chair of the1999-2000 team of Youth Consultants at Spring Valley High School. She was very involved in service through the VikingServe Program, as well as in her role as Student Body President. In the fall of 2000, she will begin her study of marketing at the University of South Carolina.

Joanna Specter was co-chair of the 1998-1999 team of Youth Consultants at Spring Valley. She was actively involved in Spring Valley by working with the VikingServe program, as well as her dedication to student council. She exercised her solid commitment to community through her numerous community service activities. Joanna is currently attending the University of Vermont studying social work.

Jamaal Young was co-chair of the 1998-1999 team of Youth Consultants at Spring Valley. During his time at Spring Valley, he was actively involved with community service through his participation in activities such as student council and the National Honor Society. He is currently serving on the Steering Committee for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Learning In Deed Initiative. Jamaal attends Georgetown University, where he studies international relations and continues his dedication to community, national, and global service.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1500 Hampton Street, Suite 250 B, Columbia, SC 29201
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National Dropout Prevention Center
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Web site: http://www.dropoutprevention.org



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